

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IGA-01 EB-07 FDRE-00 AGR-05

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R 131009Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0202

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PARIS FOR OECD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, XY

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DBC CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS TO NIAMEY

1. AMBASSADOR AND DAC CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS, ACCOMPANIED BY MADAME DE LATTRE OF OECD STAFF, CALLED ON PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE FOR 45 MINUTE DISCUSSION OF WILLIAMS' MISSION AT CILSS MEETING, NIAMEY, AND A NIGER'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. DISCUSSION WAS CORDIAL AND FRANK WITH PRESIDENT CANDIDLY EXPRESSING HIS DESSATISFACTION WITH PERFORMANCE OF CILSS TO DATE. PRESIDENT ALSO OUTLINED NIGER'S IMMEDIATE DEVELOPMENTAL CONCERNS IN THE FIELD OF HELATH, AGRICULTURE, WATER DEVELOPMENT AND LIVESTOCK.

2. AFTER PRELIMINARIES, WILLIAMS INFORMED PRESIDENT THAT HE WAS IN NIAMEY AS GUEST OF CILSS REGIONAL COORDINATOR DAKOURE TO PRESENT TO CILSS MEETING PROPOSAL WHICH HAD EVOLVED AT RECENT DAC MEETING IN PARIS AT INSTIGATION OF US AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS TO MOBILIZE MORE EFFECTIVELY INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

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FOR SAHEL AND TO INSURE THAT THIS INTEREST IS SUSTAINED

OVER THE LONG RUN. WILLIAMS SAID THERE WAS HIGH LEVEL OF INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REGARDING SAHEL'S LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT BUT IN ORDER TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT ADEQUATE RESOURCES CONTINUED TO BE AVAILABLE IN YEARS AHEAD, THERE WAS NEED FOR CATALYST TO MAINTAIN THIS INTEREST. WHAT WAS ENVISIONED WAS AN INFORMAL "CLUB DES AMIS DU SAHEL" WHICH WOULD MEET PERIODICALLY IN PARIS WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM CILSS AND GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO REVIEW REGION'S LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND CONSIDER RESOURCES TO MEET THESE NEEDS. SUCH GATHERINGS MIGHT BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IN MOBILIZING RESOURCES FOR LARGE SAHELIAN PROJECTS OF A REGIONAL NATURE SUCH AS DEVELOPMENT OF WATER RESOURCES.

3. IN RESPONSE, KOUNTCHE SAID HE HAD TWO POINTS TO MAKE ABOUT CILSS: (1) CILSS PERFORMANCE TO DATE WAS DISAPPOINTING; HE HAD INSTRUCTED HIS REPRESENTATIVE AT CILSS MEETING TO "WAKE IT UP". HE ADDED HE HAD DISCUSSED FUTURE OF CILSS WITH OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE DURING RECENT SUMMIT MEETING AT BNAGUI AND THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT CILSS HAD NOT LIVED UP TO EXPECTATIONS; (2) IF CILSS COULD BE REVITALIZED HE FELT CILSS COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE AS INFORMATION AND RESEARCH CENTER AND IN FORMULATING DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS AND PRIORITIES.

4. KOUNTCHE WENT ON TO OUTLINE NIGER'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS WHICH IN BROAD TERMS HE SAID INVOLVED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTITUTION OF LIVESTOCK WHICH WAS ECONOMIC BASE OF NOMAD POPULATION. NUMEROUS PROJECTS WERE REQUIRED TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THESE FRONTS. SOME WERE UNDERWAY BUT NIGER LACKED RESOURCES TO FINANCE ALL OF THEM AND HAD TO TURN TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR HELP. AGAINST THIS GENERAL BACKGROUND OF NEEDS HE GAVE HIGH PRIORITY TO HEALTH REQUIREMENTS OF NATION AND NOTED THAT NIGER LACKED MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO INSURE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF ITS PEOPLE. REFERRING TO HIS TRIPS AROUND COUNTRY, HE SAID HE WAS SHOCKED AT CONDITIONS IN WHICH HE FOUND PEOPLE AND NOTED HOW GRATEFUL HE WAS FOR US CONTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE WHICH HAD PROVIDED SHELTER FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AFTER FLOODS IN AGADEZ LAST AUGUST. THERE WERE ALSO HEALTH PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF SOCIAL CHANGES. FOR EXAMPLE, AUTHORITIES WERE NOW DISCOVERING THAT INCIDENCE OF CORONARY PROBLEMS HAD SHARPLY INCREASED AMONG NOMADS AS THEY UNDERTOOK LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANUAL LABOR IN PROCESS OF SEDENTARIZATION. THIS DESERVED CAREFUL STUDY.

5. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING NIGER'S MANY IMMEDIATE NEEDS, WILLIAMS EXPLAINED AGAIN LONG-TERM NATURE OF PROPOSAL FOR DONOR COORDINATION IN ATTEMPT TO KEEP ATTENTION OF INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY FOCUSED ON SAHEL. DAC PROPOSAL WAS NOT TO CREATE ANOTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR ITS OWN SAKE BUT TO WORK

TOGETHER IN INFORMAL "CLUB DES AMIS DU SAHEL" IN ANY
WAY IN WHICH CILSS AND COUNTRIES OF SAHEL SAW FIT. KOUNTCHE
SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS CONCEPT AND WELCOMED IT. HECK

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